

Amendments To The Specification:

Please replace previously amended paragraph [0026] with the following further amended paragraph [0026]:

[0026] Threads 12 of first component 10, and threads 22 of second component 20, can be formed by various machining techniques that enable the synchronization of the timing of the thread profiles. Sleeve 30 does not require any specialized machining processes because timing is not required. This fabrication process ensures that there is essentially no gap between mating face 14 of first component 10 and mating face 24 of second component 20 after connection sleeve 30 is screwed into placed. As illustrated in FIGS. 1 – 5, but particularly FIG. 1, sleeve or connection collar 30 includes an internal straight thread (~~preferably a single continuous thread~~) such that when first component 10 is in pre-defined axial alignment with component 20, collar 30 threads continuously from the first component 10 onto the second component 20. ~~A straight thread is a thread such as commonly used with bolts or other load-bearing threaded connections, as opposed to a thread that is tapered to provide a seal such as commonly used in threaded pipe connections.~~

Please amend previously amended paragraph [0027] with the following further amended paragraph [0027]:

[0027] FIG. 5A illustrates another embodiment of this invention. In this embodiment, mechanical synchronization of the timings of threads 12 and threads 22 is not required. Instead, first component 10, having connection sleeve 30 already threaded thereon, and second component 20 are placed in the proper axial alignment, i.e., such that any openings that need to be aligned, are aligned. For example, in the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 5A, opening 1 in first component 10 is aligned with opening 2 in second component 20 and opening 3 in first component 10 is aligned with opening 4 in second component 20. During the connection make-up process, first component 10 and second component 20 are separated, while the alignment of openings 1 and 2 and of openings 3 and 4 is maintained, until the distance between first component 10 and second component 20 (the "required distance") is such that if threads 12 and threads 22 were continuous through the required distance, they would form a continuous-thread path between first component 10 and second component 20. Proper alignment of the openings between component 10 and component 20 can be provided using alignment pins, or nipples 6 and nipple recipients 7, that mate between the components, e.g., through openings 1 and 2 or

through openings **3** and **4**, as illustrated in FIG. 1 - 3. The required distance between first component **10** and second component **20** may be maintained by a spacer. For example, a spacer **26** may be placed between components **10** and **20** such that a first end 26a of spacer **26** abuts mating face **14** of component **10** and a second end 26b of spacer **26** abuts mating face **24** of component **20**. In this example, spacer **26** is a suitable piece of metal, as will be familiar to those skilled in the art. The spacer **26** may be sized to space the first and second components by a desired stand-off separation distance **28**. In another embodiment, illustrated in FIG. 5B, a spacer **27** is adjustable and is in the form of a screw. A threaded end **27b** of a spacer **27** is screwed into component **20** via mating face **24** until the proper stand-off separation distance **29** is achieved as shown, and a top end **27a** of spacer **27** abuts mating face **14** of component **10**. In ~~some implementations~~ an alternative embodiment and as illustrated in FIG. 5B, an indentation **24a** is provided in component **20** at mating face **24**. In ~~some embodiments, the~~ this embodiment, stand-off separation distance **29** is preferably ~~may be~~ equal to the distance of one thread pitch or less. Once the required distance is maintained, connection sleeve **30** is threaded from first component **10** to second component **20**. In yet another embodiment, the connection can be made up without a spacer by physically moving component **20** axially away from component **10** until the required distance is achieved and connection sleeve **30** is threaded from first component **10** to second component **20** at least until the threads of sleeve **30** engage with the threads on component **20**. Other embodiments, either using a spacer or not, to generate the required distance are within the scope of this invention. Once the required distance is maintained, connection sleeve **30** is threaded from first component **10** to second component **20**. The required distance between mating faces **14** and **24** can range from zero to several thread pitches. Any or all parts of a connection according to this invention may be coated with a suitable coating to provide protection from galling and/or corrosion, as will be familiar to those skilled in the art.